

# The Special Collections Research Center Education Program: A Reflection on Success



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# { Introduction }

The Special Collections Research Center Education program is committed to using primary sources to enrich student learning, improve information literacy, alter student outcomes, and create valuable and memorable learning experiences.

We use our collections to challenge assumptions, illustrate opposing viewpoints, question historical judgments and present an organic model for original scholarship.

We partner with faculty and instructors from all fields of study to customize learning experiences that will most benefit your students.

*Source: SCRC Education Program Pamphlet*



## { Education Archivist GA }

The Education Archivist Graduate Assistant works closely with UK students, explores fascinating collections, and develops impactful exhibitions at the SCRC. He or she works collaboratively with the Archives team of librarians to support and advance teaching and outreach using primary resources.

Other responsibilities include:

- Develop exercises for graduate and undergraduate classes using primary sources
- Assist with hands on learning experiences
- Aid in evaluation processes
- Provide outreach to the university community
- Assist in developing, preparing, and installing exhibits

# { Session Options }

The Education Program offers four types of educational sessions as part of the Information Literacy Program. Each session corresponds with a different learning outcome, and is assessed using an online survey.

1. 1. Introduction to the SCRC
  - Policies and procedures
  - Requesting materials
2. Using and Evaluating Primary Sources
  - Defining primary sources
  - Importance across disciplines
3. Active Learning Exercise and Activities
  - “Hands-on” activity using primary sources
  - Prompt or worksheet
4. Combination and Customized Options
  - Work in one 80-minute class or two 50-minute classes
  - Recommended for all levels



# { Sample Worksheet }

## Option #2 LO 3 & 4



UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY  
Libraries

Special Collections Research Center  
Margaret I. King Library  
[libraries.uky.edu/SC](http://libraries.uky.edu/SC)

### Exploring Primary Sources Exercise

**Remember: Be VERY CAREFUL AND GENTLE while handling all documents.**

#### Step 1 - Describe

**Examine the collection of documents/items in your box or on your table, and write a description.** (What kinds of materials are they? Can you identify any similarities or differences? Do the documents have any distinguishing characteristics? (Ex: Do they have a date range? Names? Places? Events?))

#### Step 2 - Brainstorm

**List 10-20 words or phrases about the documents/items.**

(What do you find interesting? Strange? Do you find anything appealing or disturbing? Things you don't understand or are unfamiliar with?)

#### Step 3 - Articulating Problems

**Formulate 2-4 possible problems that could be developed from the above list of words and description of materials.** (Problems can be found by looking for tensions between ideas, conflicts between your own experience and what the text/image presents, assumptions underlying the arguments of the text/item, or if you notice any gaps or missing information overlooked by the source).

#### Step 4 - Posing Fruitful Questions

**List 2-4 open-ended questions for one problem that could lead to more in-depth research.**

#### Step 5 – What is at Stake?

**Thinking about the description, brainstorming list, problems, and questions, write 2-5 sentences answering the following: So what? Why does this matter? Why would someone care about this topic and why?**

#### Step 6 – Think and Share

**At the end of the session, we will reconvene as a class and discuss our findings.**

Adapted from: *Looking for Trouble: Finding Your Way into a Writing Assignment* by Catherine Savin <http://wac.colostate.edu/books/writingspaces2/savini--looking-for-trouble.pdf>

## { Statistics and Testimonials }

**104%** increase in student participants  
**2038** number of students, 2015-2016  
**94%** positive student experience

"I never knew what the Special Collections Research Center was before the class session. It opened my eyes to all the useful information that I was previously missing out on. I will definitely be using the SCRC for future research papers." - First-year student

"The session helped me understand what I was looking for. I now know how to narrow down my search results and find the documents that I need. I know how to cut a significant amount of time from my search through historical archives." - Third-year, History Major



# { 3-year Overview }

